

# Wellbeing Support for the Dental Team

A UK WIDE RESOURCE



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# Context & Introduction

As dental professionals we recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing for our patients. However, we may not always recognise or prioritise our own mental health needs.

Research has shown that occupational stress is common amongst the dental profession and is a key driver of burnout and mental ill health<sup>(1)</sup>. These problems can affect individuals at any stage of their career. There has traditionally been a reluctance amongst the dental profession to speak about personal problems, including mental ill health, and seek support. This can be driven by concerns about confidentiality, embarrassment, and the impact of health disclosures for professional registration.

It is clear that not all dental professionals are aware of the appropriate support that addresses their unique professional roles and concerns.

This guide has been created for dental professionals (including students). [Section 2](#) outlines strategies to maintain your wellbeing and techniques for self-care. [Sections 3 and 4](#) outline the range of organisations available to support you. [Section 5](#) highlights some resources to help your colleagues and family.



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**I think this is such a fantastic idea!** I've been talking to other dental students/professionals lately about **mental health** in dentistry and how we never really knew where to find **resources** to help us with it. I think this document will really help!

**Dental professional**

”

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# Self-Care for Mental Health and Wellbeing



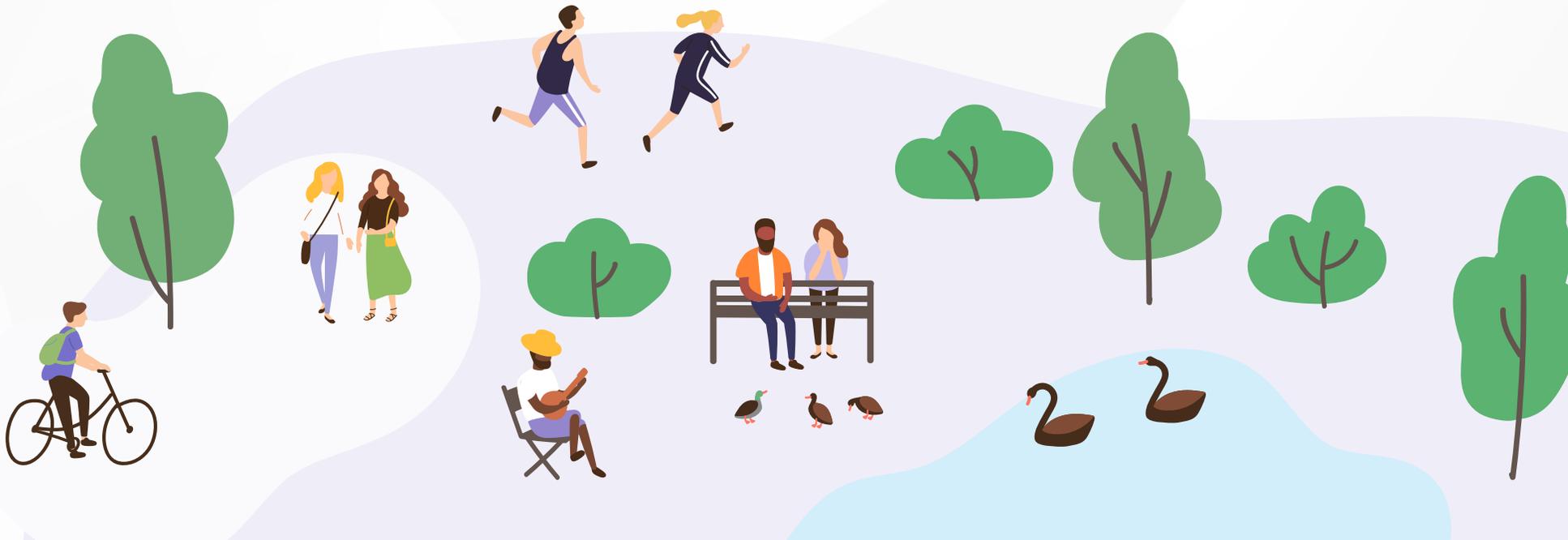
## 2.1 5 ways to wellbeing

The mental health charity Mind and the NHS suggest [5 evidence-based steps](#) to improve your mental health and wellbeing. The 5 steps include connecting with other people, being active, learning something new, giving to others and mindfulness. Both [Mind](#) and the [NHS](#) provide suggestions for each of the 5 steps.

## 2.2 Every Mind Matters (Public Health England)

[Every Mind Matters](#)<sup>(2)</sup> is a Public Health England (PHE) initiative to encourage greater awareness of mental health, with NHS-endorsed practical tips and tools for self-care. This includes strategies and resources for managing stress, poor sleep, anxiety and low mood. It forms part of PHE's "Better Health" brand which is designed to help people make healthier lifestyle choices.

Every Mind Matters provides a [short quiz](#) (2-3 minutes length) with 5 questions to help you build a practical plan to maintain and improve your mental health and wellbeing. A summary of some common problems is provided across the following pages, in addition to initial self-care strategies.



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## 2.2.1 Stress

Stress can be an appropriate physiological response to external circumstances. Short-term, low-level stress can be helpful or motivational and help us cope with specific challenges. However long-term or high-level stress brought about by personal or professional challenges is harmful to our health and wellbeing. Dentistry can be demanding, and stress is common amongst the profession<sup>(1)</sup>. Sources of professional stress include concerns about complaints and litigation, workload pressures and difficult patient interactions<sup>(1)</sup>. Stress can cause changes to mood, concentration, enjoyment of life and have a range of physical manifestations including fatigue and headaches. Self-care strategies for stress are outlined in Figure 1. If you have been experiencing stress for a prolonged period of time that is distressing or impacting your daily life, you should consider seeking professional support. This may be through your GP, NHS 111 (online or by phone), or the organisations listed in this document ([Section 3.3](#)). If you reside in England, you could also self-refer to IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) who provide assessment and psychological therapy, or in Northern Ireland you can self refer to Inspire.

**Figure 1:** Self-care strategies for stress reproduced from Every Mind Matters



### Split up big tasks

If a task seems overwhelming and difficult to start, try breaking it down into easier chunks, and give yourself credit for completing them.



### Be more active

Being active can help you to burn off nervous energy. It will not make your stress disappear, but it can make it less intense.

[Home workout videos](#)



### Allow yourself some positivity

Take time to think about the good things in your life. Each day, consider what went well and try to list 3 things you're thankful for.



### Talk to someone

Trusted friends, family or colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling. Watch our video for more ideas.

[Social Connection Video](#)



### Challenge unhelpful thoughts

The way we think affects the way we feel. Watch our video to learn how to challenge unhelpful thoughts.

[Reframing unhelpful thoughts video](#)



### Plan ahead

Planning out any upcoming stressful days or events – a to-do list, the journey you need to do, things you need to take – can really help.

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## 2.2.2 Sleep

Sleep problems are common and can be disruptive to day-to-day life if they become persistent. Sleep disturbance may accompany other symptoms such as anxiety or low mood. Poor sleep can compound mental health problems, which can further disturb sleep. The concept of 'sleep hygiene' has become popular over recent years, and in essence means creating an environment in which you can relax and is conducive to sleep.

There are a number of online applications and phone apps designed to improve sleep (e.g. [Pzizz and Sleepio](#)). Most sleep problems improve with good sleep hygiene and self-care strategies (Figure 2). If you continue to have sleep problems seek additional support from your GP or the organisations outlined below ([Section 3.3](#)).

**Figure 2:** [Self-care strategies for sleep reproduced from Every Mind Matters](#)



### Keep regular sleep hours

Going to bed when you feel tired and getting up at roughly the same time helps teach your body to sleep better. Try to avoid napping where possible.



### Confront sleeplessness

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not force it. Get up and do something relaxing for a bit, and return to bed when you feel sleepier.



### Create a restful environment

Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep. Watch our video for tips on how to sleep better.

[Tips for sleeping better video](#)



### Write down your worries

If you often lie awake worrying about tomorrow, set aside time before bed to make a list for the next day. This can help put your mind at rest.

[Tackle your worries video](#)



### Move more, sleep better

Being active can help you sleep better. These videos can get you going, but remember to avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep.

[Home workout videos](#)



### Put down the pick-me-ups

Caffeine and alcohol can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to cut down on alcohol and avoid caffeine close to bedtime.

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### 2.2.3 Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of unease that persists and is out of proportion to the situation that you are in. It may relate to professional circumstances, personal circumstances, or may not have a specific cause. Anxiety can cause physical symptoms including increased heart rate, shortness of breath and sweating, and may lead to behaviour changes such as avoidance of anxiety-inducing situations. These avoidant behaviours can exacerbate anxiety. If self-care strategies (Figure 3) do not help your anxiety, contact your GP, NHS 111 (online or by phone), or the organisations outlined later in this document ([section 3.3](#)). If you reside in England, you can self-refer to IAPT for psychological therapy, or in Northern Ireland you can self refer to Inspire.

**Figure 3:** Self-care strategies for anxiety reproduced from Every Mind Matters



#### Understand your anxiety

Try keeping a diary of what you are doing and how you feel at different times to help identify what's affecting you and what you need to take action on.



#### Make time for worries

If your worry feels overwhelming and takes over your day, setting specific "worry time" to go through your concerns each day can help you to focus on other things. Watch the video for more advice.

[Tackle your worries video](#)



#### Challenge your anxious thoughts

Tackling unhelpful thoughts is one of the best things we can do to feel less anxious. Watch the video to find out more.

[Reframing unhelpful thoughts video](#)



#### Shift your focus

Some people find relaxation, mindfulness or breathing exercises helpful. They reduce tension and focus our awareness on the present moment.

[Try NHS-recommended relaxation exercises](#)



#### Face the things you want to avoid

It's easy to avoid situations, or rely on habits that make us feel safer, but these can keep anxiety going. By slowly building up time in worrying situations, anxious feelings will gradually reduce and you will see these situations are OK.



#### Get to grips with the problem

When you're feeling stressed or anxious, it can help to use a problem-solving technique to identify some solutions. This can make the challenges you're facing feel more manageable.

[From Problems to Solutions \(PDF\)](#)

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## 2.2.4 Low mood

Low mood can be triggered by specific events or may be spontaneous. For many individuals low mood will pass within a short period of time. Self-care strategies (Figure 4) may help low mood to pass. If your mood is persistently low, or you experience loss of enjoyment of normal activities, or a feeling of helplessness, with these feelings affecting you most days over a period of two weeks or more, your symptoms may represent depression. If you are concerned you have depression, you should contact your GP, NHS 111 or the organisations outlined below for support (Section 3.3). If you reside in England, you can self-refer to IAPT for psychological therapy, or in Northern Ireland you can self refer to Inspire.

**Figure 4:** Self-care strategies for low mood reproduced from Every Mind Matters



### Increase helpful activity

Low mood can stop us doing important or enjoyable activities. Try listing these things and doing some each day. Start with easier ones and, as you progress, your mood should improve.



### Get better sleep

Low moods can make us feel tired. Tiredness can also have a bad impact on our mood. Watch our video on tips to improve your sleep.

[Tips for sleeping better video](#)



### Challenge unhelpful thoughts

The way we think affects the way we feel. Watch our video to learn how to challenge unhelpful thoughts.

[Reframing unhelpful thoughts video](#)



### Be kind to yourself

Try to break big tasks down into manageable chunks, and do not try to do everything at once. Give yourself credit when you complete each bit.



### Talk to someone

Trusted friends, family and colleagues, or contacting a helpline, can help us when we are struggling. Watch our video for more ideas.

[Social connection video](#)



### Healthy living

Being active, cutting back on alcohol and making sure we have a healthy balanced diet can help boost your mood, and help our wellbeing.

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I have been in the dental profession for over 10 years now and I have suffered from **anxiety, stress, depression** and **insomnia** throughout most of this time. I began to think that maybe I was the problem – that I wasn't cut out for my job and that it was just too much for me to handle.

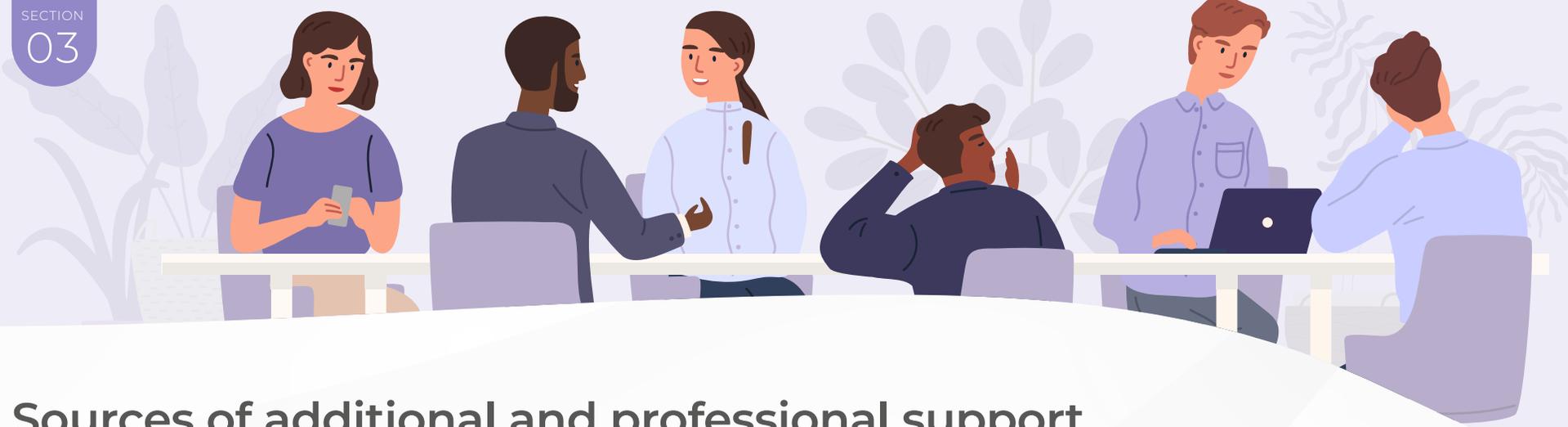
What I hadn't realised, was that **our profession is actually too much for anyone to handle**. This is why we are so susceptible to mental health problems and why self-care isn't optional. The most important thing I've ever learned is that **self-care is mandatory**. It's often overlooked by health care professionals because we are so patient-focused. We don't remember to check in on ourselves. Ever since I started doing this, most of my **mental health problems have subsided**.

**Dental professional**

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## Sources of additional and professional support

### 3.1 Friends and family

Alongside self-care strategies, support from trusted family, friends and colleagues can sometimes be helpful as it can be good to talk things through.

Help and professional support is also available from a wide variety of sources, in [Section 3.3](#).



### 3.2 Urgent and immediate support

For **urgent support** across the UK contact NHS 111 (online or by phone) or the Samaritans.

#### **NHS 111 online**

[NHS 111 online](#) or **call 111** in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (call **111** or **0845 46 47** in Wales)

#### **Samaritans UK**

[The Samaritans](#) provide free 24-hour support. They can be contacted on **116 123**.

#### **NHS Urgent Mental Health helplines**

In England, you can access urgent support through **local NHS urgent mental health helplines**. [This website](#) allows you to search for your local 24 hour service.

#### **Lifeline Northern Ireland**

In Northern Ireland, Lifeline Northern Ireland provide free 24 hour support with a local counsellor. They can be contacted on **0808 808 8000**.

**For immediate support, a life-threatening crisis or medical emergency contact the emergency services on 999.**

Emergency Departments usually have separate rooms that provide privacy and confidentiality for individuals presenting with mental health distress and you will be able to access professional help.

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### 3.3 General Mental Health and Wellbeing

There are many professional sources of help for the dental team, offering a variety of support, including counselling, signposting to appropriate services, and medical management of mental health problems. A key has been included to highlight which member of the dental profession they are relevant for.

#### Your own GP ●●●●●

If you are feeling overwhelmed, then consider speaking to your own GP in the first instance. They will know you and your medical history, and are experienced in helping patients with stress, burnout and mental health problems.

#### Occupational Health ●

Occupational Health is available to dentists in salaried positions in the UK and to GPs in Scotland and Northern Ireland. They are experienced in helping patients with stress, burnout and mental health problems and will offer independent, confidential advice and access to local wellbeing services.

#### NHS people ●●●●●

NHS People is a resource to help all NHS staff manage their mental health and wellbeing. The website has many resources including guides to help you improve your experience of work, access to virtual common rooms, wellbeing apps and support helplines. It has also developed focused resources to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[people.nhs.uk](http://people.nhs.uk)

**0300 131 7000** 7am-11pm

**0300 303 4434** (for bereavement specific support) 8am-8pm

#### NHS Practitioner Health (England) ●

This is a free NHS service for doctors and dentists (NHS and private) in England experiencing problems related to mental health or addiction. The service recognises the specific challenges facing dentists, such as: isolation due to working in a small practice environment, the specific physical challenges of dentistry, economic pressures and time pressure. The service is staffed by a range of staff including GPs, psychiatrists and psychologists.

[practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/about-practitioner-health](http://practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/about-practitioner-health)

**0300 0303 300** (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 8am-2pm)

#### Inspire (Northern Ireland) ●

This is a free service offering counselling support for all dentists in Northern Ireland. Self-referral is available through a contact request via their website.

[inspirewellbeing.org](http://inspirewellbeing.org)

#### National Wellbeing Hub (Scotland) ●●

The Hub is a wellbeing service for all health and care workers in Scotland. They provide information regarding self-care through their website, with a helpline for more specific support.

[promis.scot](http://promis.scot)

**0800 111 4191**

#### Health for Health Professionals Wales ●●●●●

This is a free, confidential service available to all health professionals and students working in NHS Wales.

[hhpwales.co.uk](http://hhpwales.co.uk)

**0800 058 2738** 9am-5pm (Monday-Friday)

#### Dentists' Health Support Trust ●

The Dentists' Health Support Trust is an organisation that can provide a wide range of support for all dentists across the UK experiencing mental health difficulties, or facing problems in relation to alcohol or drugs. They can provide one-to-one support for dentists, and their families, and help to signpost and coordinate care between other organisations.

[dentistshealthsupporttrust.org](http://dentistshealthsupporttrust.org)

**0207 224 4671** 7.30am-10.30pm

#### Health Assured ●●●●●

**(British Dental Association (BDA) /British Association of Dental Nurses (BADN)/Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP) members, and via the BDA Benevolent Fund)**

Health Assured is an employee assistance programme offering a helpline available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, in addition to a range of wellbeing resources. It is freely available for BDA, BADN and FGDP members. For non-members, it can also be accessed via the BDA Benevolent Fund. Their support includes counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy, as well as advice and signposting regarding physical and mental health problems, bereavement, financial difficulties and legal problems. This support can be extended to immediate family members.

[bda.org/advice/Pages/Health-Assured.aspx](http://bda.org/advice/Pages/Health-Assured.aspx)

[badn.org.uk/News/Mental-health-and-wellbeing-for-dental-nurses.aspx](http://badn.org.uk/News/Mental-health-and-wellbeing-for-dental-nurses.aspx)

[fgdp.org.uk/news/helpline-service-available-fgdpu-members](http://fgdp.org.uk/news/helpline-service-available-fgdpu-members)

[bdabenevolentfund.org.uk/other-support](http://bdabenevolentfund.org.uk/other-support)

Key: Services available for: ● Dentists ● DCPs ● Dental students ● DCP students



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### Society of British Dental Nurses ●●

Dental nurses who are members of this organisation can access wellbeing advice through the Society's website. They also provide a confidential helpline for members requiring urgent support.

[sbdn.org.uk](http://sbdn.org.uk)

07437 481182 9.30am-7pm (Monday - Friday) and 9.30am-2pm (Saturday)

### UK Balint Society ●●●●

Balint groups are available all over the UK. They are comprised of different professionals from health and social care. Balint group membership provides a space to think about patient encounters, with a focus on the emotional aspects of these interactions rather than the clinical aspects.

[balint.co.uk](http://balint.co.uk)

### Confidential ●

Confidential is a registered charity that provides emotional first aid for dentists. It is staffed entirely by practising and retired dentists who can listen to and advise dentists facing difficulties, or signpost to appropriate onward services.

[confidential-helpline.org](http://confidential-helpline.org)

0333 987 5158

### University wellbeing resources ●●

All universities have a duty of care to their students and have well established wellbeing resources and crisis helplines, specifically designed to help students. They offer independent, confidential advice and access to local wellbeing services. Many dental schools will have assigned staff members who can provide confidential support and signposting to services.

### Student Minds (UK) and Student Space (England and Wales) ●●

Student Minds is a mental health charity run for students. They offer advice about self-care, signposting to services and peer support programmes. They also run Student Space, which is available for all students in England and Wales. Student Space offers support by phone, email and text and can help you search for support at your university.

[studentminds.org.uk](http://studentminds.org.uk) (UK)

[studentspace.org.uk](http://studentspace.org.uk) (England and Wales)

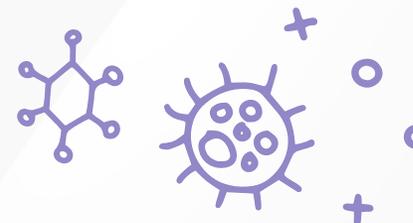
Student Space support line: 0808 189 5260  
4pm-11pm (Monday-Sunday)

### Local and informal support

There are a number of informal groups offering support across the UK, either locally or through social media such as Facebook or WhatsApp groups. Examples include informal virtual groups such as 'MentalDental'.

### 3.3.1 Military Dental Professionals

Dental professionals serving in the armed forces have access to additional resources for mental health and wellbeing. There is a long-established pathway for mental health within the military called Trauma and Risk Management (TRiM)<sup>(9)</sup>. All members of the armed forces have access to Occupational Health through the Defence Medical Services. In addition, confidential self-referral can be made to SilverCloud, an external provider that can arrange virtual assessment and counselling services.



### 3.4 COVID-19 related support

All 4 countries have a COVID wellbeing response. This is available to all salaried dental teams and in some cases, to those working in the independent sector. Please visit the coronavirus pages on your country's Public Health website for details.

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Everyone else from university seemed to be doing so well, I thought I was the only one in dentistry that was unable to manage family and practice. **I will never forget the relief I felt when I spoke to the Dentists' Health Support Trust, their advice and support was fantastic.** I now know the hardest part of this was admitting I had a problem and seeking help.

**Dental professional**

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### 3.5 Workplace concerns

Difficulties in the workplace can affect mental health and wellbeing. If you are having workplace difficulties aim for local resolution, where possible. Within a secondary care environment there are well-defined Trust/Health Board (Scotland) and University specific protocols for managing workplace concerns. Within primary care, your practice should have in house protocols for managing workplace concerns, typically through your practice manager or practice principal. If this is unsuccessful, consider contacting your Local Dental Committee (LDC) for initial advice (Health Board Dental Practice Adviser or Area Dental Committee (ADC)/LDC in Scotland).



#### 3.5.1 Local Dental Committee (LDC)

##### PASS Scheme

Most Local Dental Committees (LDCs) in the UK have access to a Practitioner Advice and Support Scheme (PASS). These are experienced local General Dental Practitioners who can give confidential and practical advice on interpersonal matters, practice disputes, or to walk alongside a colleague who has received a complaint or is under GDC investigation.

Details of individual LDCs can be found through the BDA website.

#### 3.5.2 Indemnity Organisations

Dealing with complaints or patients threatening litigation can be very stressful. These situations have been shown to be a major contributor to workplace stress for dental professionals. Seek help early to deal with complaints: your indemnity organisation can be very helpful in terms of responses to patients. A number of indemnity organisations offer additional practical wellbeing support, including online wellbeing resources and counselling services. Contact your indemnity provider to find out what they can offer.

#### 3.5.3 Additional Support

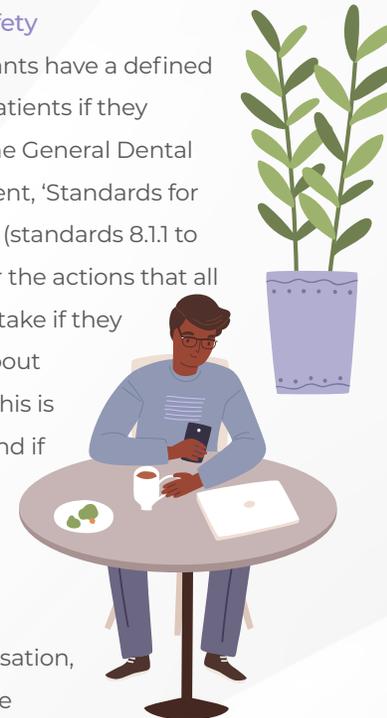
Irrespective of your place of work, you can seek support from your union, if you are a member, or your indemnity organisation.

Organisations that can provide assistance for financial concerns are provided in [section 3.7](#).

Advice about how to help a colleague in difficulty is provided in [section 5.1](#).

#### 3.5.4 Patient safety

All dental registrants have a defined duty to protect patients if they have concerns; the General Dental Council's document, 'Standards for the Dental Team' (standards 8.1.1 to 8.5.2) makes clear the actions that all registrants must take if they have concerns about patient safety<sup>(4)</sup>. This is a complex area and if you have these concerns you should consider contacting your indemnity organisation, or union, if you are a member.



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I was suffering from **burn out** and **acute anxiety**; then I had a patient make a complaint to the GDC. **The Dentists' Health Support Trust** arranged counselling and the acute anxiety started to diminish; **I am so grateful for the help** and support I received.

**Dental professional**

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## 3.6 Addiction

The **Dentists' Health Support Trust**, **NHS Practitioner Health** and **Health Assured** ([section 3.3](#)) can provide support for addiction to **alcohol**, **drugs**, **gambling** or **other addictions**.



### 3.6.1 Drugs and alcohol

In addition to the three organisations listed above, you may find the following charities and support groups helpful.

#### British Doctors and Dentists Group ●●

The British Doctors and Dentists Group (BDDG) is a support/self-help group for dentists with current or past addictions to alcohol, drugs (prescription and non-prescription) or other addictions. Meetings are held across the UK.

[bddg.org](http://bddg.org)

07850 125 119 (National Secretary)

#### We Are With You ●●●●

(formerly known as Addaction)

This is a national organisation that can provide support for alcohol and drug addiction. Contact details for local branches can be found through their website.

[wearewithyou.org.uk](http://wearewithyou.org.uk)

#### Alcoholics Anonymous ●●●●

Alcoholics anonymous runs mutual support groups across the country for people concerned about their alcohol consumption. Local meetings can be found through their website and online support is available.

[alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

0800 917 7650

#### Narcotics' Anonymous ●●●●

Mutual support groups for individuals who want to stop using drugs (including non-prescription and prescription drugs). Local meetings can be found through their website.

[online.ukna.org](http://online.ukna.org)

0300 999 1212 (10am-midnight, 7 days a week)

#### Cocaine Anonymous ●●●●

Mutual support groups for individuals who want to stop using cocaine or other mind-altering substances (defined as alcohol and prescription and non-prescription drugs). Local meetings can be found through their website.

[cocaineanonymous.org.uk](http://cocaineanonymous.org.uk)

0800 612 0225 (10am-10pm, 7 days a week)

### 3.6.2 Gambling

This brief [NHS questionnaire](#) can help you to assess if you have a gambling problem. It also signposts where to seek help, including GamCare and Gamblers Anonymous UK, and provides advice about specialist NHS services for people with complex gambling problems (National Problem Gambling Clinic).

#### GamCare ●●●●

GamCare runs the National Gambling Helpline and can provide specialist advice by webchat or phone. There is also a group chat facility to share your experiences with other people in a similar situation and an online message board.

[gamcare.org.uk](http://gamcare.org.uk)

0808 8020 133 (24 hours a day, 7 days per week)

#### Gamblers Anonymous UK ●●●●

Mutual support group for individuals who want to stop gambling. Local meetings can be found through their website.

[gamblersanonymous.org.uk](http://gamblersanonymous.org.uk)

Key: Services available for: ● Dentists ● DCPs ● Dental students ● DCP students

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I was in a mess. I was **addicted**; then my world caved in when I got arrested. I knew the GDC would find out. I thought I was going to lose my job, my house and my family. I contemplated suicide. I eventually called the **Dentists' Health Support Trust**; they immediately put me in contact with a team of people and I realised **I was not alone**, they helped me and as a result today, **I feel healthy and happy**.

**Dental professional**

”

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### 3.7 Financial Concerns

#### BDA Benevolent Fund ●●

The BDA Benevolent Fund supports undergraduate dental students, dentists and their families in financial hardship. Financial aid can be provided for essential personal expenditure. The Benevolent Fund can also signpost advice and resources for financial problems and provide access to Health Assured ([Section 3.3](#))

[bdabenevolentfund.org.uk](http://bdabenevolentfund.org.uk)

020 7486 4994 (Monday - Friday 9.30am-5.30pm)

#### Money Advice Service ●●●●

Free and impartial money advice over the phone and online to improve your finances (covering savings, mortgages and pensions), in addition to support regarding debt, redundancy and benefits.

[moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

0800 138 7777 (Monday - Friday 8am-6pm).

#### Citizens Advice ●●●●

Advice regarding finances, including debt, workplace financial concerns and benefits.

[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

#### Turn2us ●●●●

This website provides a benefits calculator and a search tool for grants available across the UK for individuals on low income.

[turn2us.org.uk](http://turn2us.org.uk)

#### University Advice Services ●●

If you are a student in financial difficulty, seek help early from your university advice service. They may be able to signpost you to internal grants and bursaries, in addition to supporting applications for external support, such as the NHS Hardship Grant ([available for students studying dentistry](#)).

For resources related to gambling, please see [Section 3.6.2](#).

“The reason for needing financial assistance was due to my family situation - my father was killed by a terrorist in 2004 and my mother is unable to work and provide an income. The financial strain proved to be a huge burden on my studies and the BDA Benevolent Fund was there for me every step of the way lifting a huge weight off my shoulders. Considering all the obstacles I faced I do not think I would have graduated this year without the BDA Benevolent Fund’s help.

Dental professional

”

Key: Services available for: ● Dentists ● DCPs ● Dental students ● DCP students

# Personal Life

The NHS/dental organisations outlined in [section 3.3](#) can provide advice and signposting regarding personal wellbeing concerns. Additional organisations (not specific to the dental profession) are outlined in this section.

## 4.1 Relationships

### Relate

Relate are the largest provider of relationship support in the UK. They can provide support for relationships between couples and family members, in addition to support regarding parenting.

[relate.org.uk](https://relate.org.uk)

## 4.2 Domestic abuse

Abuse can involve emotional, physical or sexual abuse. [This NHS website](#) provides information about different types of abuse and the range of organisations that can help. Anyone experiencing abuse can seek support from their GP/doctor, nurse, health visitor, or midwife. In an emergency you should call 999.

### Refuge

Refuge provide the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for women. They can provide practical and emotional support for women experiencing abuse.

[refuge.org.uk](https://refuge.org.uk)

[nationaldahelpline.org.uk](https://nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

**0808 2000 247** (24 hours a day, 7 days per week)

### Men's Advice Line

The Men's Advice Line provides telephone and online support for men experiencing domestic abuse.

[mensadvice.org.uk](https://mensadvice.org.uk)

**0808 801 0327** (Monday-Friday 9am-8pm)

### ManKind

Telephone support for men experiencing domestic abuse.

[mankind.org.uk](https://mankind.org.uk)

**01823 334 244** (Monday-Friday 10am-4pm)

## 4.3 Caring responsibilities

### Carers UK

Carers UK estimate that 1/8 adults in the UK provide unpaid care for relatives or friends. Care UK can provide personalised support to help manage the impact of caring responsibilities on work or home life.

[carersuk.org](https://carersuk.org)

### Age UK

Age UK provide information and support regarding care, finances and health for older people.

[ageuk.org.uk](https://ageuk.org.uk)

### Adult social care support

Information on adult social care support.

[nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide)

### Children's social care support

Information on children's social care services, including children with additional needs.

[nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/](https://nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/caring-for-children-and-young-people/)

## 4.4 Cancer and end of life care

### Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan supports patients and families affected by cancer and can assist with physical, emotional and financial support.

[macmillan.org.uk](https://macmillan.org.uk)

### Marie Curie

Marie Curie supports patients and families with end of life care.

[mariecurie.org.uk/who](https://mariecurie.org.uk/who)

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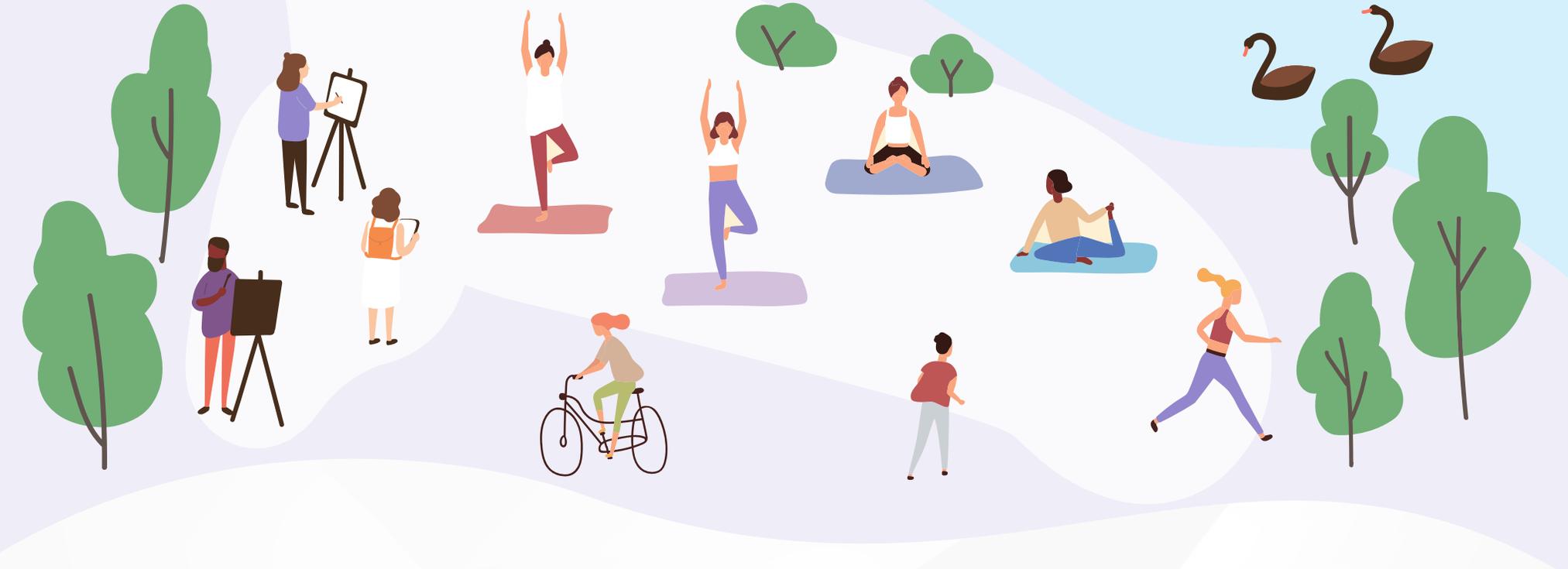
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### 4.5 Bereavement

#### Cruse Bereavement

Cruse is run by trained bereavement volunteers who can provide support for anyone who has experienced bereavement.

[cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)

#### Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK helps children and young people (up to age 25), parents and families cope with bereavement.

[childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.org)

#### Support after Suicide Partnership

The Support after Suicide Partnership bring together organisations and individuals to provide support for anyone bereaved by suicide.

[supportaftersuicide.org.uk](http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk)

### 4.6 Community and cultural specific organisations

This section provides an overview of some of the available organisations. Most do not have a specific wellbeing service, but they can act as a support network and may provide advice that cannot be gained elsewhere.

#### LGBTQ+ dentists

[gladd.co.uk](http://gladd.co.uk)

#### BAPIO

(For dentists of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Nepalese background)

[bapio.co.uk/about-bapio](http://bapio.co.uk/about-bapio)

#### African and Caribbean Dental Association UK

[acda-uk.org/about-the-acda/executives](http://acda-uk.org/about-the-acda/executives)

#### Christian Dental Fellowship

[cdf-uk.org](http://cdf-uk.org)

#### UK Sikh Doctors Association

[sdda.org.uk/news](http://sdda.org.uk/news)

#### Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association UK

[facebook.com/MuslimDoctorsAndDentistsAssociationUK](https://facebook.com/MuslimDoctorsAndDentistsAssociationUK)

#### Jewish Medical Association UK

[jewishmedicalassociationuk.org/about-jma](http://jewishmedicalassociationuk.org/about-jma)

# Helping Others

## 5.1 Colleagues

I'm worried about a colleague.  
How can I help them?

You may wish to speak directly with your colleague in an informal context to see if you can offer any help. You could also signpost them to the organisations outlined in [section 3.3](#). However, in many instances it may be more appropriate to raise your concerns with your line manager, as there will be established protocols within your workplace that need to be followed. There may also be ongoing or previous problems that you are not aware of.

If you are a practice principal or line manager, ensure that concerns have been appropriately documented and local protocols have been followed. Consider involving your local occupational health service, LDC, or signpost your colleague to the services outlined in this document. You may also wish to download the [Mental Health for Employers Toolkit](#). This toolkit provides guidance on creating a positive workplace environment, in addition to guidance about supporting employees in need.

If you have urgent concerns about patient safety, this should be raised immediately within your

workplace to ensure that your colleague does not deliver patient care until the situation has been risk-assessed by their line manager (or the person with patient safety responsibilities within the practice/the dental body corporate, or the practice owner). All dental registrants have a defined duty to protect patients if they have concerns; the General Dental Council's document, 'Standards for the Dental Team' (standards 8.1.1 to 8.5.2) makes clear the actions that all registrants must take if they have concerns about patient safety (4). If you have these concerns you should consider contacting your indemnity organisation, or union if you are a member.



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## 5.2 Mental health first aid

Mental health first aid (MHFA) is a scheme to train individuals to identify and provide initial support to people in distress with mental health difficulties. The 2-day MHFA course raises awareness of common mental health problems, how to spot signs of mental health distress, and how to help someone in distress. Within your workplace, you may wish to discuss the idea of a nominated individual becoming trained in [MHFA](#).

## 5.3 Suicide awareness and prevention

Structured 4-hour training has been shown to reduce the incidence of self-harm and suicide<sup>(5)</sup>. The [Zero Suicide Alliance](#) provides online training regarding suicide awareness and how to help someone if you are worried about them. SafeTALK<sup>®</sup> training is available to all dentists and their teams in NI through the Deanery (NIMDTA).

### Samaritans UK

If you are worried about someone, the Samaritans offer advice about how to help.

Although they advise contacting the emergency services if you have urgent or immediate concerns about someone, they provide information about how to help someone immediately, in the short term and in the longer term.

[samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else)

116 123

0808 164 0123 (Samaritans Welsh Language Line)

### Papyrus UK

Papyrus works to prevent suicide amongst young people under the age of 35. If you are worried about a young person in a professional or personal capacity, their website contains practical information about how to help. Papyrus also runs Hopeline UK, a confidential helpline for individuals with thoughts of suicide, and provides advice if you are worried about someone.

[papyrus-uk.org](https://www.papyrus-uk.org)

0800 068 4141

**The help I received was fantastic**, I was so fortunate that a colleague told me to contact them. I just dread to think what might have happened if I had not made that call; **no criticism, no condemnation, simply support and advice.**

**Dental professional**

If you or someone you know has experienced bereavement due to suicide, you may find the organisations in [Section 4.5](#) helpful.

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## 5.4 Family members

A number of organisations listed in [section 3.3](#) can provide support to family members of dentists. **Health Assured** ([section 3.3](#)) extends its support to immediate family members (partners, in addition to dependents aged 16-24 living in the same household and in full time education). The **Dentists' Health Support Trust** ([section 3.3](#)) can support family members of dentists affected by mental health problems and addiction.

The **British Doctors and Dentists Group (BDDG)** ([section 3.6.1](#)) supports dentists with addiction problems and has a separate support group for affected family members ([Families Group of BDDG](#))

### **Families-Anon**

A mutual support group for friends and family members of individuals with drug related drugs. [famanon.org.uk](http://famanon.org.uk)

### **Al-Anon**

A mutual support group for friends and family members of individuals with alcohol related problems. [al-anonuk.org.uk](http://al-anonuk.org.uk)

### **The National Association for Children of Alcoholics**

An organisation supporting people of all ages whose parents have alcohol related problems. [nacoa.org.uk](http://nacoa.org.uk)  
0800 358 3456

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## Steering group:

John Cameron  
 Laura Hannon  
 Ros Keeton  
 Roz McMullan  
 Shalini Nayee  
 Rory O'Connor  
 Pepe Shirlaw  
 Sandra White

## Disclaimer

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